[English]

Restructuring Measures for Toy Trains

6407: SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government have been drawn to the news item captioned 'Restructuring measures tor toy trains on a bumpy track' appearing in the Asian Age dated March 11,1997;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government to the observations made therein and facts in the matter; and

(c) the details of action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Railways are aware of the unremunerativeness in the running of trains in the Hill Sections mentioned in the News Item. In order to reduce the losses in running the train services, the following steps have been taken:-

(a) Withdrawl of inflation in distance for charge for passengers fares for travel within the section;

(b) Special steps to boost tourist traffic by tapping the potential for the same.

The implementation of the steps is a continuous process and are carried out without any let up.

[Translation]

Development of Tourism

6408. SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH:

SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals sent by the State Governments of Gujarat, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh during 1996-97 to develop the identified places of tourist interests in the States;

(b) the details of proposals cleared/rejected/pending by the Union Government;

(c) whether the amount allocated by the Union Government to above States for development of tourism during the last three years have been utilised by the State Government;

(d) if so the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) Central Department of Tourism prioritised the projects/schemes for financial assistance for tourism development in consultation with the State/U.T. Governments, which is an ongoing process. The projects/schemes are sanctioned based on the merits, availability of funds and inter-se priorities. During the year 1996-97, total number of projects/schemes were sanctioned by Central Department of Tourism are as follows:-

	No. of Projects Sanctioned
Gujarat	11
Bihar	4
Uttar Pradesh	17

(c) to (e) During the last three years, Central Department of Tourism has sanctioned Rs. 111.38 lakhs for 16 projects/schemes to Gujarat, Rs. 526.86 lakhs for 32 projects/schemes to Uttar Pradesh and Rs. 268.96 lakhs for 15 projects/schemes to Bihar. The utilisation of funds sanctioned by Central Department of Tourism is the responsibility of the State/U.T. Governments. Funds are released in instalments after receiving utilisation certificates from the State Governments.

Out of Order Rural Telephone in Uttar Pradesh

6409. SHRI RAMMURTY SINGH VERMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the telephones installed under rural communications system in Uttar Pradesh are lying out of order;

(b) the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to improve such means of communications; and

(d) whether the matter is likely to be got examined through an expert committee?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Sir, most of the telephone exchanges installed under rural communications system in Uttar Pradesh have already been converted into digital electronic exchanges and connections from these exchanges are working satisfactorily. However, there are some problems in maintenance of long distance connections including Village Public Telephones, due to various reasons.

(b) The reasons for interruptions and breakdowns are as follows:-

(i) Remote and inaccessible locations and unsatisfactory transport facilities.

(ii) Theft of overhead lines and wires.

(iii) Unstable power supply.

(iv) Damage due to lightening.